

WHITE HOUSE OCCURRENCES

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WHITE HOUSE

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# Abraham Lincoln's White House

## White House Occurrences

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection





By Courtesy of Holman's Print Shop, Boston, Mass.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN": An Engraving by Timothy Cole

## How a Soldier Viewed Lincoln

MR. LINCOLN had a quick comprehension of mechanical principles and found both amusement and interest in the cloud of inventors with devices important or visionary, that the war brought to Washington. One proposed to do away with the need for bridges by giving each soldier a pair of little watertight canoes, one for each foot. Another had an epoch-making scheme for moving artillery by means of iron-clad balloons. Some of them obtained permission to set up models in the White House basement, and the grounds south of the Executive Mansion became a favorite place for trying the new guns. When he could escape from the labors of the office, or omit his daily drive, Mr. Lincoln stole away to watch the experiments, to take his turn at the shooting, and enjoy the remarks of the bystanders.

until he saw the President at one of the windows, spyglass in hand, looking toward the Old Dominion. How many times he used that glass to sweep the Virginia hills! How many times he and Mr. Seward traveled the same road, not quite in step, but one in purpose! How many, many times his smile and spirit won men and women as they captivated that boy!—From "Personal Traits of Abraham Lincoln," by HELEN NICOLAY. Copyright, 1912, by The Century Company.



Dr. R. Gerald McMurty, Director  
Lincoln National Life Foundation,  
Fort Wayne, Indiana. 46801

*OK*  
*1/5/70*

Dear Sir:-

Thank you very much for your letter of December 30, 1969.

Enclosed are the thermofaxed copies from the "Record of the Descendants of Ezekiel and Mary Baker DeCamp of Butler County, Ohio," relating to the visit the DeCamp brothers had with President Lincoln in the White House in March 1865, about which I had written previously. This book is a complete family history (Up to 1896) but is no longer obtainable I understand.

If there is any more information I can give you, I would appreciate hearing from you further.

Sincerely,  
*E. Aurelia Verbeke*  
Mrs. Frank G. Verbeke,

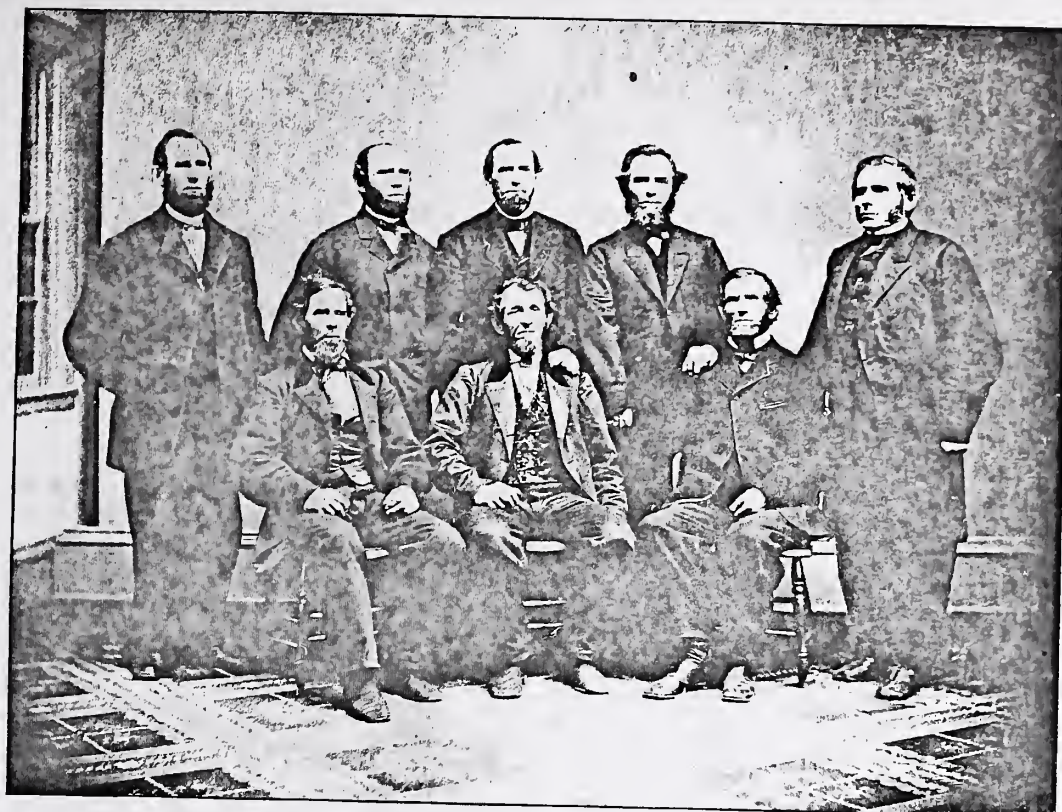
January 3, 1970.

## VISIT TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

At the close of the Civil War, in March, 1865, a month before the death of President Lincoln, the eight De Camp brothers then living—David, Walter, Hiram Harvey, Joseph, Daniel, Lambert, and Job—went East in a body, enjoying themselves in New York City, stopping to visit relatives in the ancestral home at Westfield, New Jersey, where the Presbyterian Church was given them for Sunday evening service of praise and experience.

Upon visiting the Capital, they were introduced to President Lincoln by Judge William Johnston, of Cincinnati, as eight brothers, all of whom had voted for him and daily prayed for Divine guidance in his behalf. The President cordially shook hands with each one, saying a kindly word to each, and when he came to Job, the youngest, the President remarked that he envied him his name, as he needed patience. Job wittily replied: "But you have a better name already—Abraham, the father of the faithful."

It was at this period that the group-picture was taken, which is shown in this book.



GROUP OF EIGHT DE CAMP BROTHERS, 1865.

Standing:	JOB.	LAMBERT.	DANIEL.	JOSEPH.	HARVEY.
Sitting:	DAVID.	WALTER.	HIRAM.		

Flag raisings and reviews became as much a part of the routine as breakfast. . . . "One pretty incident of the review," my father wrote, "was the passing of the Garibaldi Guards, a regiment made up entirely of foreigners whose colonel's commands in French were translated in process of transmission to the men into German, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, and several other tongues. Each man had stuck a flower or sprig of green into his hat, and as the successive ranks passed the President, they took them out and threw them toward him, until he stood in a perfect shower of leaves and blossoms." . . .

An ingenuous soldier boy wrote home to his family in Maine that at the flag raising the President wore plain citizen's clothes "with blue kid gloves" which were short at the wrist and showed his bare arm as he pulled the rope "with as much deliberation as though he had been working his old flatboat down the river."

Sudden emotion choked the boy as the colors floated free, and a burst of military music and cheering filled the air. But it was the President's smile which impressed him most. "I think I should willingly ride fifty miles to vote for him again as I did last November," he wrote. He watched the 71st New York escort Mr. Lincoln back to the White House. "I wish you could have seen him march. He paid little or no attention to the music of Dodworth, but paced off at an irregular rate"—the pioneer gait that he never exchanged for city-bred movements—"while Mr. Seward, whose arm he held, was seen to keep step, his left foot on the down beat."

The boy lingered near the White House

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The scene was the White House. Some visitors were expressing criticism of the administration. President Lincoln heard them patiently, and then replied, "Gentlemen, suppose all the property you were worth was in gold, and you had put it in the hands of Blondin to carry across the Niagara River on a rope, would you shake the cable, or keep shouting out to him, 'Blondin, stand up a little straighter—Blondin, stoop a little more—go a little faster—lean a little more to the north—lean a little more to the south?' No! you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safe over. The government is carrying an immense weight. Untold treasures are in their hands. They are doing the very best they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence, and we'll get you safe across."

